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Ontario Women's Directorate

NEWS RELEASE

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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT TRAINING FRONT LINE HEALTH WORKERS TO SUPPORT VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Emergency Personnel Given Tools To Detect Early Signs Of Abuse

STRATFORD – The McGuinty government is launching an innovative training program so that Ontario emergency room doctors and nurses will be better able to detect the early signs of domestic violence, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Sandra Pupatello today announced.

"Doctors and nurses are often the first to see the physical signs of domestic violence when women seek medical attention," said Pupatello. "That's why we are launching a program that will help emergency room staff recognize the signs of abuse and provide victims with the appropriate support and information."

Women's College Research Institute will be implementing the online training program, which consists of animated scenarios that will help doctors and nurses increase their knowledge about domestic violence, its health impacts and how best to help women who may be abused.

Each of Ontario's emergency departments will be offered an orientation session beginning in the Fall of 2007. Participants will then be ready to complete the online training session, at home or in the hospital.

The $1 million in funding for the program comes from the government's four-year Domestic Violence Action Plan.

"This is an excellent initiative that will help emergency departments better understand and support women who are victims of domestic violence in our community," said Minister of Health and Long-Term Care George Smitherman.

"With this training, doctors and nurses can improve on how they would respond to a domestic violence situation in a way that recognizes their demanding schedules," said Andrew Williams, CEO Huron Perth Healthcare Alliance. "Our thanks to the Ontario government for funding such an important initiative."

From left to right: John Wilkinson, MPP for Perth-Middlesex; Hon. Sandra Pupatello, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues; Dr. Brian Schwartz & Dr. Robin Mason, Co-Chairs, Health Expert Panel; Tim Cronsberry, Board Chair, Huron-Perth Health Care Alliance; and Andrew Williams, CEO, Huron-Perth Health Care Alliance, at the launch of the training program to help Ontario emergency room doctors and nurses detect early signs of domestic violence, announced by Minister Pupatello at the Stratford General Hospital, August 28, 2007.

This is just one more example of how the McGuinty government, working together with community partners, has achieved results in preventing violence against women:

- Investing more than $190 million annually to provide violence against women services across government. This includes more than $82 million in new funding over four years to the Domestic Violence Action Plan to provide better community-based supports, implement public education and training strategies, strengthen Ontario's criminal and family justice systems response, and provide better access to French-language services
- Funding $5.9 million over four years for training, research and conferences to assist professionals in recognizing the signs of domestic violence and provide appropriate supports and referrals.
- Launching the Equality Rules public education campaign, which teaches youth ages eight to 14 about healthy, equal and respectful relationships to help break the cycle of violence before it starts. For more information, visit www.equalityrules.ca

From left to right: Dr. Brian Schwartz, Co-Chair, Health Expert Panel; Hon. Sandra Pupatello, Minister Responsible for Women's Issues; John Wilkinson, MPP for Perth-Middlesex; and Dr. Robin Mason, Co-Chair, Health Expert Panel, during a demonstration of the on-line training session, part of the training program to help Ontario emergency room doctors and nurses detect early signs of domestic violence, announced by Minister Pupatello at the Stratford General Hospital, August 28, 2007.

Investing in the Neighbours, Friends and Families public education campaign, which provides information to help individuals recognize the signs of abuse and know what action to take. Public service announcements, a website (www.neighboursfriendsandfamilies.on.ca), brochures, a poster and wallet cards are available as part of the education campaign.

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